

Safety Warning: A.I.R. Atos

This safety warning applies to all models of the A.I.R. Atos rigid glider.

In June, a fatal accident occurred involving a Japanese pilot whilst taking off from the launch site at Buchenberg (Bavaria, Germany). The main suspension had become detached from the Atos's keel tube. As a result, the pilot, who was in his harness, became separated from the glider and fell onto steep terrain. The investigation revealed that the main suspension had not been correctly attached to the keel tube. Photographs taken at the launch site prior to the accident flight showed that the Atos in question (a glider on loan from the manufacturer) had initially been fitted with a correctly installed suspension. The pilot had obtained a suspension of a different length from the manufacturer and had replaced the suspensions at the launch site. In doing so, he had failed to secure the new suspension. It was fixed to the keel tube with just a Velcro strip. The Velcro held during the launch preparations and the take-off run, but came loose after take-off under the weight of the pilot.



Figure 1: Correctly fitted and secured main suspension



Figure 2: Accident configuration

The suspension line for the connection to the harness (1) has not been threaded through the loop (2). The suspension line is not secured and is held in place only by the Velcro strip on the top of the keel tube (3). This Velcro strip is intended to secure the trim setting of the Atos. When a load is applied to the suspension, the Velcro comes undone and the suspension detaches from the glider. In the configuration without the canopy (as shown in the pictures) this error is very obvious and impossible to overlook.

The loop through which the harness connection is threaded is largely concealed as soon as the canopy is closed (zipper).

Safety implications

A fatal accident with the same cause occurred in Switzerland in 2023.

When might this problem occur?

- It does not normally occur during normal use or operation, provided that no changes are made to the suspension.
- When the suspension is changed.
- If the Velcro strip on the keel tube and the safety Velcro (white) are opened to adjust the trim, the entire suspension system loosens and the connecting strap to the harness may slip out of the loop.

Safety warnings

- All owners and pilots of an Atos (all models) are urged to familiarise themselves with the safety issue described.
- As described in the Atos operating manuals, the correct assembly of the suspension must be checked as part of the pre-flight check before every flight.
- Situations requiring the suspension to be dismantled or loosened: Particular care must be taken and the correct fitting of the suspension must be double-checked.

The manufacturer has been asked by the DHV to improve the suspension system on all Atos, both existing and new. Equipment owners and pilots are asked to check regularly for any safety warnings issued by A.I.R or the DHV.

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DHV safety notes (in German):

<https://www.dhv.de/sicherheit/sicherheitsmitteilungen/>

